Colombo Plan
For Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific

Introduction

The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific was conceived at the Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs held in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in January 1950 and was launched on 1 July 1951 as a cooperative venture for the economic and social advancement of the peoples of South and Southeast Asia.

It was grown from a group of seven Commonwealth nations– Australia, Britain, Canada, Ceylon, India, New Zealand, and Pakistan – into an inter-governmental organization of 27 members, including non-Commonwealth countries. When it adopted a new constitution in 1977, its name was changed to "The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific" to reflect the expanded composition of its enhanced membership and the scope of its activities.

The Colombo Plan was instituted as a regional intergovernmental organization for the furtherance of economic and social development of the region` nations. It is based on the partnership concept for self-help and mutual help in the development process with the focal areas being, human resource development and south-south cooperation. While recognizing the need for physical capital to provide the lever for growth, the Colombo Plan also emphasized the need to raise the skill level to assimilate and utilize the physical capital more efficiently.

In the early years, Colombo Plan assistance from developed to developing countries comprised both transfer of physical capital and technology as well as a strong component of skills development. Hence, while infrastructure by the ways of airports, roads, railways, dams, hospitals, fertilizer plants, cement factories, universities, and steel mills were constructed in member countries through Colombo Plan assistance, a large number of people were simultaneously trained to manage such infrastructure and the growing economies. Over the years, while adhering to the concept of human resource development and south-south cooperation in addressing issues of economic and social development, the programmer contents of the Colombo Plan has been changing to take account of

the needs of the member countries in a fast changing world economic environment.

In the early years, the training programmers were more of a long-term nature while recent programmers have been focusing on providing advance skills and experience sharing aimed at arriving at the best practices in different fields of economic and social activities as a means of good policy making and governance.

The current programmes of the Colombo Plan are in the areas of public policy formulation in an environment of globalization and market economy, private sector development as a prime mover for growth and in drug abuse and prevention in member countries. The Colombo Plan also provides skill development opportunities for technicians in middle level through another programme of it – the Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education located in Manila.

Objectives

- To promote interest in and support for the economic and social development of Asia and the Pacific;
- To promote technical cooperation and assist in the sharing and transfer of technology among member countries;
- To keep under review relevant information on technical cooperation between the member governments, multilateral and other agencies with a view to accelerate development through cooperative effort;
- To facilitate the transfer and sharing of the developmental experiences among member countries within the region with an emphasis on the concept of South-south cooperation.

Membership

Colombo Plan includes countries from Asia and the Pacific and beyond. Its membership includes Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States of America and Vietnam.

Organizational Structure

1. The Consultative Committee: With all member governments included, it is the highest review and policy-making body of the Colombo Plan.
2. The Colombo Plan Council: Heads of diplomatic missions of member governments who are resident in Colombo, Sri Lanka are members of the Council.
3. The Colombo Plan Secretariat, headed by a Secretary-General is located in Colombo, Sri Lanka, since 1951 and functions as the secretariat for the Consultative Committee and the Council.

Programs

The Colombo Plan has 4 permanent programs:

- Drug Advisory Program (DAP)
- Capacity Building Program
- Gender Affairs Program (GAP)
- Environment Program

Iran & Colombo Plan

Islamic Republic of Iran, as a member of Colombo Plan organization, has great attachment for promotion and strengthening of cooperation in the organization, that's why is has actively participated in all CP activities and programs over the past years. Today, Islamic Republic of Iran along with the United States of America, Japan, Maldives, Thailand and Myanmar is the member of Standing Committee of the Colombo Plan on Administrative and Financial Matters for financial year 2022-2023.

https://colombo-plan.org/